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Title: Regarding arrest of Indian fishermen by Pakistan.

DR. SHASHI THAROOR (THIRUVANANTHAPURAM): Madam, in addition to associating with this particular concern raised by the two previous speakers, I want to point out that in the last ten days, Indian fishermen have been arrested by Pakistan. Currently, a number of fishermen from my constituency have been detained by the British in Diego Garcia.

I want to underscore the plight of the fishing communities all over India because the majority of them are surviving hand to mouth even in the fishing season as the fish stocks in nearby waters are getting depleted and they are forced to sail deeper and deeper, resulting in their arrest and imprisonment overseas, not just by Sri Lanka but also by Pakistan and now by the British in Diego Garcia.

As I have suggested previously in this House, Madam, modernization of fishing infrastructure and a credible assistance package from the Government are urgent requirements. Equally, young fisherfolks need access to special skill development opportunities to allow them to take up alternative schemes of employment apart from fishing, although ones need to supplement their income during the trawling ban.

Madam Speaker, irrespective of whether our country grows at ten per cent or not, we must translate this into a concern for the greater good of the bottom ten per cent of our population which include our fishermen. Our fishermen need the Government's urgent attention and urgent help.

Thank you.

HON. SPEAKER:

Adv. Joice George,

Shri P.K. Biju,

Dr. A. Sampath and

Shri Sankar Prasad Datta are permitted to associate with the issue raised by Dr. Shashi Tharoor.